

Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behavior: A Conceptual Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a conceptual analysis of how social media influencers affect consumer behavior. It explains how influencers build trust, create attractive content, and use their online popularity to shape people's buying decisions. Since the past five years, the size of social networks as well as social media users have been doubled and this growth is creating a new marketing hurdle. This research is about the study of the consumer's complex purchases, that keeps a special on how the process is being influenced by social media.

The paper reviews ideas from previous research to show how factors like credibility, engagement, and emotional connection influence consumers. It also highlights how social media platforms make it easier for people to follow trends and make quick purchase decisions. This analysis helps in understanding why influencers are becoming an important part of marketing and how they guide consumer choice.

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Hypothesis:

H1: Higher credibility of social media influencers positively influences consumer purchase decisions.

H2: The physical attractiveness and personality appeal of influencers positively affect consumer attitudes toward a product.

H3: Consumers are more likely to trust and follow recommendations from influencers who appear authentic and honest.

H4: High-quality and engaging influencer content increases consumer interest in the promoted product

H5: Greater consumer engagement with influencer posts (likes, comments, shares) leads to higher intention to purchase.

H6: Influencer promotions increase brand awareness, which positively impacts consumer purchase intention.

Literature Review

By Misron, This research paper explains that social media influencers have a strong impact on the buying

behavior of Generation Z. Since Gen Z is highly active on digital platforms, they find influencers trustworthy and relatable, and often follow their recommendations.

The authenticity, trustworthiness, and ethical behavior of influencers directly affect the purchasing decisions of Gen Z.

Additionally, social influence, the tendency to follow trends or popular figures, acts as a mediator and increases the overall impact of influencers on consumers.

The study concludes that if brands want to target Gen Z effectively, they should choose influencers who are authentic, ethical, and trustworthy.

Findings

Generation Z responds strongly to influencers who are credible, authentic, and ethical. Social influence amplifies this effect, making influencer marketing a powerful tool for driving both short-term sales and long-term loyalty.

Mr. Shiv Ranjan, This research paper explains how social media affects consumer buying behavior. Today, people use social media daily for information, entertainment, and product research. Because of this, social media has a strong influence on what people buy.

The study shows that consumers use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc. to look for product information, read reviews, and get new ideas. Most people search for products on social media before buying anything. Social media ads, influencers, and customer reviews all impact their decisions. Most consumers, especially age 15–25, find new buying ideas from social media. Social media helps consumers compare options, check reviews, and then decide what to buy.

By Siddharth Nair, This research paper studies how social media influencers affect customers' buying behavior, especially among the younger generation.

The paper explains that people today spend a lot of time on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, etc. Because of this, influencers have become very powerful, they can easily shape people's opinions and choices.

Influencers help promote products through photos, videos, reviews, and recommendations. Customers trust influencers more when they are honest, relatable, and authentic.

Young people often buy products after seeing them used by influencers.

Social media gives easy access to product details, reviews, and comparisons, so customers make quicker decisions.

The study shows that influencer marketing increases brand awareness, trust, and buying intention.

Findings

Social media strongly influences consumer buying behavior, especially among young people (15–25 years). Consumers use platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat to search for products, read reviews, and compare options. Influencers play a key role by promoting products through honest and relatable content, increasing brand awareness, trust, and purchase intention. Social media helps customers make faster and more informed buying decisions.

By Dr. B. Mohan Kumar, This research paper explains that social media influencers have a strong impact on consumer buying behavior. People trust influencers because they seem real, relatable, and honest. Influencers use platforms like

Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to share product recommendations that affect audience choices. The paper highlights that Gen Z and millennials rely heavily on influencers for ideas, trends, and purchase decisions. Influencers build trust through personal stories, reviews, and emotional connections. Brands use influencer marketing because it gives higher engagement and better results than traditional ads. However, challenges like fake followers and lack of authenticity can reduce trust. The paper also mentions that micro and nano influencers are becoming more popular due to higher credibility. Overall, influencer marketing is growing fast and plays a major role in shaping modern consumer behavior

By, Richika Kedia, This research paper studies how social media influencers affect the buying behavior of students in Guwahati City. The study found that 91% of students follow influencers, especially in beauty, fashion, fitness, and gaming. Most students watch influencer content daily or weekly, and many are likely to buy products recommended by them. The strongest factor influencing purchases is the influencer's expertise, followed by their lifestyle and authenticity. Statistical analysis shows a clear link: the more students engage with influencers, the more their buying behaviour increases. Students aged 21–25 are the most active users and are highly influenced by online content. Although some students doubt influencer credibility, many still depend on influencer reviews before buying. The study concludes that influencer marketing is very effective for brands targeting students, but success depends on trust and authenticity of the influencer.

By Nursansiwi, in 2024, The research paper, utilizing a systematic literature review, explores the significant impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior in the digital era. It identifies four primary factors.

magnitude of this influence: the credibility of the influencer, which refers to the level of trust and respect from followers; the type of content shared, with authentic, relevant, and engaging content having a greater impact; the strategic use of the social media platform to match the target market and campaign context; and the level of engagement and interaction between the influencer and their followers, which creates a stronger, more personal connection. The study concludes that understanding these factors is crucial for brands and companies aiming to design effective marketing strategies to shape consumer preferences and purchasing decisions.

Findings

Social media influencers have a strong impact on consumer buying behavior, especially among Gen Z and young adults (ages 15–25). Consumers trust influencers who are authentic, relatable, and credible, and rely on their reviews, lifestyle, and recommendations for purchase decisions. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are the most influential. Factors such as influencer credibility, engaging content, platform strategy, and follower interaction increase purchase intention. Micro and nano influencers are gaining popularity due to higher trust. Overall, influencer marketing drives brand awareness, engagement, and buying decisions, particularly among students and young consumers

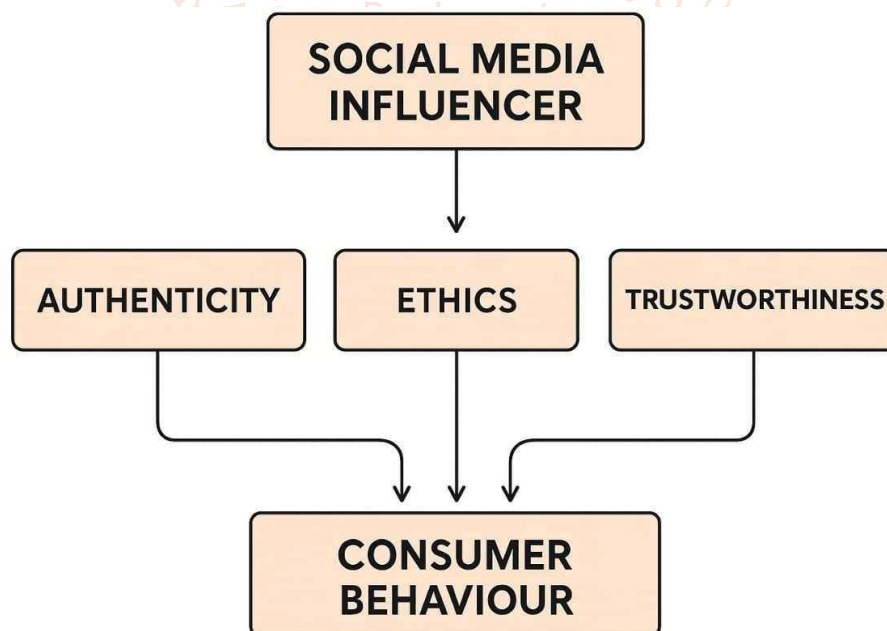
Bhardwaj et al., in 2024, The research paper, which uses a systematic literature review, highlights the significant role of social media influencers in shaping consumer preferences, attitudes, and purchasing decisions in the digital age. The study identifies four key factors that increase an influencer's effectiveness: their credibility (how much followers trust them), the content they share (it must be authentic, relevant, and engaging), the correct choice of social media platform (matching the audience), and a high level of engagement and interaction with followers. Essentially, a deeper

understanding of these mechanisms allows brands to create more effective marketing strategies.

The paper concludes that social media influencers have a strong and positive impact on customer buying behavior. Their reviews, lifestyle content, and recommendations shape what people think, what they like, and what they finally choose to buy. Companies should use influencer marketing to reach customer effectively.

Findings

Social media influencers play a crucial role in shaping consumer buying behavior, particularly among young adults and students. Micro and nano influencers are increasingly effective due to their credibility and relatability, while high engagement through comments, live sessions, and Q&A strengthens trust. Consumers are most influenced by authentic, relevant, and emotionally engaging content, and the choice of platform—such as Instagram for lifestyle products or TikTok for Gen Z—enhances marketing impact. Influencers affect not only purchase decisions but also consumer attitudes, trends, and brand perception. Although some skepticism exists regarding fake followers or paid promotions, influencer marketing consistently provides higher engagement and ROI compared to traditional advertising, making it a key tool for brands.



Hypothesis testing & findings

H1: Higher credibility of social media influencers positively influences consumer purchase decisions.

Supported. The studies show that consumers trust influencers who are credible and reliable, which strongly affects their buying decisions. Higher credibility leads to increased purchase intention.

H2: The physical attractiveness and personality appeal of influencers positively affect consumer attitudes toward a product.

Supported. Research indicates that influencers with attractive personalities and relatable lifestyles create positive attitudes among consumers, making products more appealing.

H3: Consumers are more likely to trust and follow recommendations from influencers who appear authentic and honest.

Supported. Authenticity and honesty are key factors in building trust. Consumers prefer influencers who share genuine reviews and real experiences.

H4: High-quality and engaging influencer content increases consumer interest in the promoted product.

Supported. Engaging, relevant, and creative content attracts more attention and increases consumer interest in products.

H5: Greater consumer engagement with influencer posts (likes, comments, shares) leads to higher intention to purchase.

Supported. Higher engagement levels strengthen the connection between influencers and followers, which increases purchase intention.

H6: Influencer promotions increase brand awareness, which positively impacts consumer purchase intentions.

Supported. Influencer marketing significantly improves brand awareness and visibility, leading to higher chances of purchase.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media influencers have a strong and growing impact on consumer behavior, especially among younger audiences. Their authenticity, credibility, emotional connection, ethical conduct, trustworthiness, and expertise play a central role in shaping how consumers think, feel, and make purchase decisions. Consumers increasingly rely on influencers as a source of information and inspiration, often seeing them as relatable guides rather than traditional advertisers. High engagement levels, honest communication, and relatable storytelling further strengthen this influence by creating emotional connections and reducing the consumer's effort in searching for product information. Overall, the research emphasizes that influencer marketing has become a powerful tool for brands, and its effectiveness depends largely on the credibility and genuine connection an influencer builds with their audience.

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